



## Abortion and Murder

The first sentence of the [grand jury report](#) that brought to justice one of the nation's most notorious abortionists and mass murderers is unintentionally profound: "This case is about a doctor who killed babies and endangered women." Although these few words are intended to describe only the horrific case of Kermit Gosnell, the 72-year-old physician who [was convicted](#) May 13 of murdering three babies born alive during late-term abortion procedures, in reality they prophetically condemn America's entire multi-billion-dollar slaughterhouse abortion industry, which over the past 40 years has been responsible for the murders of an estimated 50 million pre-born babies at all levels of development.



While Gosnell's trial brought to light some details about late-term abortion that were far more graphic than even many dedicated pro-life activists are used to, in reality, [observed Paul Rondeau](#) of American Life League, what Gosnell was up to was qualitatively no different "than what happens in Planned Parenthood, NARAL Pro-Choice and other abortion clinics over 1.2 million times every year. It stems from the same mindset found in any abortuary in any building in any small town community or big city." That mindset places money and profit at the forefront of importance while disdaining the lives and futures of the women and children who are on the receiving end of abortion "services."

### "House of Horrors"

Kermit Gosnell's sordid story exploded onto pro-life news sites (while being mostly ignored by the major media) nearly a year after federal agents raided his "House of Horrors" abortion clinic in February 2010. What the agents found upon entering Gosnell's Women's Medical Society in Philadelphia might have come out of a Hollywood horror movie. According to testimony from agents on the scene that day, the conditions in and around the procedure rooms were, "by far, the worst" they had ever seen. "The clinic reeked of animal urine, courtesy of the cats that were allowed to roam (and defecate) freely," the 281-page grand jury report recalled. "Furniture and blankets were stained with blood. Instruments were not properly sterilized. Disposable medical supplies were not disposed of; they were reused, over and over again. Medical equipment — such as the defibrillator, the EKG, the pulse oximeter, the blood pressure cuff — was generally broken; even when it worked, it wasn't used. The emergency exit was padlocked shut." One agent said that the cleanliness and general atmosphere of the clinic resembled that of an unserviced gas station restroom.

The physical conditions of the clinic were not the worst of what agents discovered, however. As they poked around the premises and investigated storerooms and refrigerators, they discovered, to their horror, the remains of scores of late-term pre-born babies in milk jugs, juice cartons, and pet food containers, along with jars containing tiny severed limbs and feet.



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The remains came, the grand jury report explained, from the late-term babies that Gosnell and his small army of untrained and unqualified assistants had killed on a regular basis as mostly low-income women from the surrounding neighborhoods streamed through for abortions at 26 weeks of pregnancy and later. The report speculated that over the years hundreds of babies were delivered alive by mothers at the clinic, and then quickly murdered by Gosnell or an assistant who would plunge a scissors into the neck of a newborn, severing the spinal cord.

One of the assistants, 50-year-old medical school dropout Stephen Massof, estimated that in his five years at Gosnell's clinic he witnessed the live births of some 100 babies, whose spinal cords were then snipped — “literally a beheading,” he said. Massof, one of several of the staff who pled guilty to murder, and are now in prison, testified that women who came in for late-term abortions would be administered medication to speed up their deliveries. Subsequently, throughout a typical evening of such procedures, “it would rain fetuses — fetuses and blood all over the place,” he recalled. “I felt like a fireman in hell. I couldn't put out all the fires.... I would run around with scissors.”

The grand jury report concluded that killing babies who had been delivered alive by their mothers at the clinic was not a rare occurrence, but “really had to be part of Gosnell's plan. His method for performing late-term abortions was to induce labor and delivery of intact fetuses, and he specialized in patients who were well beyond 24 weeks. Thus, the birth of live, viable babies was a natural and predictable consequence. The subsequent slitting of spinal cords, without any consideration for the babies' viability, was an integral part of what Gosnell's employees called his ‘standard procedure.’”

### **Not an Aberration**

[Planned Parenthood](#) and other [abortion groups](#) did their best to ignore the shock the American public expressed as pro-life and conservative websites — followed to a lesser extent by reluctant major news outlets — exposed the horrors that went on inside Gosnell's clinic. As it turns out, they knew about it all along, but did nothing to put an end to the killings and the abuse of women. And for good reason. Far from being the “aberration” the abortion industry would like to portray Gosnell as being, in reality the birth and murder of viable babies during abortions have added up to “standard procedure” for quite a number of abortion clinics over the years.

As some pro-life leaders had speculated would happen, the Gosnell case appeared to embolden assistants working with similar murderous abortionists around the country. In early May, as Gosnell's trial was winding down, three former employees of a Houston clinic came forward to [testify on video](#) that they had witnessed abortionist Douglas Karpen kill babies born during late-term abortions by snipping their spinal cords, sticking a scissors into the soft spot in their skulls, and even by twisting off their heads.

On May 14 the pro-life group Life Dynamics released the video in which the three women — Deborah Edge, Gigi Aguilar, and Krystal Rodriguez — are seen and heard recalling the murders they said occurred regularly at Karpen's Houston clinic. While the women do not identify Karpen by name, Troy Newman of Operation Rescue did so the day after the video was released.

### **“With His Own Bare Hands”**

On the video, Edge says that live births were a common occurrence at Aaron Women's Clinic in Houston. “I think every morning I saw several, on several occasions,” she says on the video. “If we had 20-something patients ... maybe 10, or 12, or 15 patients would be large procedures, and out of those large procedures I'm pretty sure I was seeing at least three or four fetuses that were completely



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delivered in some way or another.”

With Aguilar and Rodriguez by her side to corroborate her testimony, Edge continues: “When he did an abortion, especially an over-20-week abortion, most of the time the fetus would come completely out before he either cut the spinal cord or he introduced one of the instruments into the soft spot of the fetus in order to kill the fetus.” She adds that sometimes Karpen would twist “the head off the neck ... with his own bare hands.”

As the women recount the scores of live births and subsequent killings they witnessed at the hands of Karpen, Gigi Aguilar recalls how one baby actually opened up his eyes and grabbed his executioner’s hand before Karpen completed the deadly “post-birth” abortion. “He was alive,” Aguilar attests of the newborn, who was later dispatched in the same manner as the others.

The legal limit for abortion in Texas is 24 weeks, but the three women confirmed that Karpen would kill babies far older than that. In the video Edge says that Karpen “does a lot of huge abortions. A lot of the times we would bring the big fetus that was over-age and we would reopen the bag and just look at it and be like, ‘ ... it’s so big!’ You know, we would be amazed how big it was.”

The women corroborated their allegations of murder with photos they took inside the abortion clinic. Operation Rescue’s Troy Newman said that the photos — which are very disturbing, to put it mildly — “show babies that are huge, with gashes in their necks, indicating that these babies were likely born alive, then killed, just as Kermit Gosnell did.” In fact, Newman added, “there are numerous similarities between Karpen and the Gosnell case, including the disregarding of complaints by the authorities that allowed both men to continue their illegal operations.”

According to the [Houston Chronicle](#), the Texas Department of State Health Services has begun to investigate Karpen, who, as of this writing, continues to perform abortions.

While the abortion lobby has insisted that monsters like Gosnell and Karpen are unusual in the abortion industry, Cheryl Sullenger, senior policy advisor for Operation Rescue, confirmed that their murderous behavior is far from uncommon. “Most authorities look the other way or flat out refuse to prosecute because they do not want to deal with the controversial issue of abortion or are politically predisposed to ignore abortion cases,” Sullenger told The New American.

### **More Disturbing Revelations**

In 2008, Operation Rescue reported that a nurse working with George Tiller associate Shelley Sella, a circuit-riding late-term abortionist, allegedly witnessed Sella stab to death a baby born alive during a late-term abortion at Tiller’s Women’s Health Care Services abortion clinic in Wichita, Kansas. The nurse, identified as Tina David, a Tiller employee, “gave us a very specific eye-witness account about the incident,” said Newman. “We were told that the baby was 35 weeks gestation at the time of the abortion. The baby came out and was moving. Sella looked up at Ms. David, then picked up a utensil and stabbed the baby in the left ribcage, twisting the utensil until the baby quit moving. At 35 weeks, there is no doubt about viability. This is murder in anybody’s book.”

And in March 2008, [Students for Life in America](#) released an undercover video in which Tiller, who was himself murdered in 2009, can be seen and heard saying that if a baby is born alive during an abortion, “it’s just sloppy technique. It is just technique that is reprehensible. The guy that did that ought to have his head beat up.”

Most recently the pro-life investigative group Live Action [released a video](#) that shows a Washington,



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D.C., abortionist admitting that he would not do anything to save a baby born alive during an abortion. Asked by an undercover Live Action investigator posing as a pregnant woman seeking an abortion what he would do if her aborted baby somehow survived his murderous late-term procedure, abortionist Cesare Santengelo concedes that while “legally we would be obligated to help it, you know, to survive,” if the mother “went into labor, the membranes ruptured, and you delivered before we got to the termination part of the procedure here ... then we would do things — we would — we would not help it.”

### **Twisting the Story**

Following Gosnell’s conviction, the abortion industry attempted to co-opt the horror for their own purposes, insisting that if everyone worked just a little bit harder to make abortion safer and more available to women, such criminal behavior like Gosnell’s would disappear. Eric Ferrero, a spokesman for Planned Parenthood, said that the Gosnell case “has made clear that we must have and enforce laws that protect access to safe and legal abortion, and we must reject misguided laws that would limit women’s options and force them to seek treatment from criminals like Kermit Gosnell.” Similarly, Ilyse Hogue of the National Abortion Rights Action League said that Gosnell’s atrocities should re-inforce the need to ensure that all women have access to a “full range of health services including safe, high-quality and legal abortion care.”

But Father Frank Pavone of [Priests for Life](#) pointed out that Gosnell-like issues have been present in the abortion industry for years. “In the mid-90’s, I helped compile the book *Lime 5*, which documents hundreds of Gosnells,” recalled Pavone to *The New American*. He added that the 1999 case of Chicago’s Christ Hospital, where then-nurse Jill Stanek revealed that babies born alive during abortion procedures were often left to die, “shows that this problem is not new.” The Christ Hospital revelations helped lead to the 2002 Born Alive Infants Protection Act, passed in an attempt to prevent babies born alive during abortions from being discarded or murdered.

Indeed, children born alive in the process of an abortion are among the most eloquent arguments against the murderous procedure altogether, regardless of whether it is done early in a pregnancy or when a pre-born baby is fully viable. There have been many such examples, including Gianna Jessen, whose mother chose a saline abortion in 1977 when she was seven and one half months pregnant. But instead of being aborted, Gianna was born — premature, badly burned by the saline injection, but alive. Because of the quick response of a compassionate nurse, who rushed the newborn to the hospital, today Gianna is a bold champion for life. “I am happy to be alive,” Jessen told a congressional subcommittee in 1996. “I almost died. Every day I thank God for life. I do not consider myself a by-product of conception, a clump of tissue, or any other of the titles given to a child in the womb. I do not consider any person conceived to be any of those things.” Jessen told the lawmakers that “the best thing I can show you to defend life is my life. It has been a great gift.”

A similarly bold champion for the unborn is Sarah Smith, who survived an abortion that killed her twin brother. Sarah’s mother, Betty, did not know that she was carrying twins when she went in for a “procedure” in 1970. “The abortionist, apparently, did not realize it either,” wrote William F. Jasper in the January 17, 2000 issue of *The New American*. “His search-and-destroy mission yielded only one tiny victim.”

Sarah recalled that several weeks after the abortion that took her brother, “my mother was shocked to feel me kicking in her womb. She already had five children and she knew what it felt like when a baby kicked in the womb. She instantly knew that somehow she was still pregnant.”



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Sarah's mother went back to the doctor with the shocking news — adding that she wanted to keep the baby the doctor missed in the “botched” abortion. “To this day, my mother deeply regrets that abortion,” said Sarah. “I know the pain is unbearable for her at times when she looks at me and knows she aborted my twin brother. Mom says ‘the protective hand of Almighty God saved my life,’ that God’s hand covered and hid me in her womb, and protected me from the scalpel of death.”

In 2008, another abortion survivor, Melissa Ohden, had the joy of delivering her first child in the same hospital where her birth mother tried to abort her via a saline injection procedure 31 years earlier. Adopted into a loving family, Melissa had no idea of her miraculous life history until she was 14, when her sister got pregnant out of wedlock and was contemplating having an abortion. It was then that her adoptive mother, Linda, decided to reveal the truth of Melissa’s birth in order to dissuade Melissa’s sister from going through with the abortion.

Recalled Melissa in a 2010 interview with [CBN News](#): “She said, ‘We never meant to keep it from you. There’s no easy way to tell you this. Please know that we’ll always love you.’ Then she just kind of blurted it out. She said, ‘Melissa, your mother had an abortion during her fifth month of pregnancy with you and you survived it.’”

Linda recalled with deep emotion the first time she saw the high-risk baby that the local social services department had offered to her and her husband for adoption. “When we first saw Melissa, her head was shaved from temple to temple, because she was too little to suck and they fed her intravenously,” Linda told CBN News. “They told us all the things that could be wrong with her because of the premature birth, but as soon as they put her in my arms, I knew she was going to be fine. She was just beautiful. Absolutely beautiful.”

Not surprisingly, the news that her birth mother tried to kill her was difficult for Melissa to deal with. “The biggest question was, ‘Why?’” she recalled. “‘Why could you make that decision to end my life? Could I have been so unwanted and so unloved by them?’ Even though I knew that Jesus loved me and my family loved me, it could not take away the pain.”

Inner healing did come, however, and with it the realization that God had a plan for her life, which included sharing her story with the world, along with becoming a wife and mother. The irony of giving birth to her first child in the hospital where an abortionist tried to kill her adds a sense of drama and justice to Melissa’s story.

“I used to drive past that hospital gripping the wheel of my car, because it was so hurtful for me to know that that is the building where I struggled for my life,” Melissa told CBN News. “Now I can drive past that hospital with my head held high, because it holds the most beautiful memories that I will ever hold in this life.”

She added that “there is no greater gift, I believe, that a woman can give than life to a child. And if she believes that she can’t provide for that child forever, the next best thing that she can do for that child then is to give them the joy of being with another family for adoption. People can say all the time, ‘You shouldn’t have lived. How could you have lived?’ For me that answer is very simple. It was the Lord. He had every hand in it. The Lord packaged me this way and He made me the person that I am to go forth and share His message.”

### **Reframing the Abortion “Debate”**

If nothing else, the Gosnell case — along with the revelations of horror and heartlessness by other abortionists — serves to put an exclamation point on the indisputable fact that whether inflicted on a





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mother and child in the early or late stages of pregnancy, or even after a child has exited the womb, abortion in every case is nothing less than murder.

Father Pavone noted that while every abortion is equally wrong, the unspeakable crimes that occurred in Gosnell's "House of Horrors" provide a frame of reference that even the most jaded of individuals cannot deny. "Focusing on live birth abortion and late term abortion is a starting point," he told The New American. "It wakes people up to what abortion means, and once awakened, they can start to consider what is and isn't different about abortion at earlier stages — but with the concrete attention to detail that is needed to get to the heart of this issue."

Operation Rescue's Cheryl Sullenger concurred, telling The New American: "As we expose the horrors of late-term abortions, it will only help further stigmatize abortion in general. People are moving toward the pro-life position and will continue to do so when they hear the truth about what happens during an abortion." She added that once people firmly oppose late-term abortions, "it is just a small step to understanding that all abortion is a brutal killing that should not be tolerated by a civilized society."

As Judie Brown of the American Life League put it, there is no qualitative difference between Kermit Gosnell and his feces-smearred, blood spattered, back-alley abortion clinic staffed by uneducated, unqualified employees, and the smiling abortionists and their staff who administer the killings in Planned Parenthood's most pristine and gleaming execution chambers. Gosnell is nothing more or less than "the exemplar of those in the industry who place no value on any human being prior to birth, or clearly after birth," said Brown following Gosnell's conviction. "He is not the exception. Every abortion kills a human being."

She emphasized that efforts to regulate the abortion industry "will not solve this terror against the innocent. Abortion is a filthy business, and shiny clean abortion chambers do nothing to change the grievous crime to the most innocent. Abortion cannot be regulated. It must be eliminated."

— Photo at top: Premature baby in an incubator

*This article, which appeared under the title "Standard Practice Murder" in the June 17, 2013 issue of The New American, is an example of the exclusive content that's only available by subscribing to our print magazine. Twice a month get in-depth features covering the political gamut: education, candidate profiles, immigration, healthcare, foreign policy, guns, etc. [Digital as well as print options are available!](#)*



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